

# CANDID REMARKS

ON

## A Pamphlet,

ENTITLED,

*"Reasons against a Separation from the  
Church of England."*

---

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

## AN APPENDIX,

Assigning Reasons why our Chapel called  
BETHÉL, was taken, and Preaching  
introduced there.

---

*By a Lover of the Truth and Peace.*

---

But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame  
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere; but strive  
In offices of love, how we may lighten  
Each other's burden, in our share of woe.

MILTON.

---

NEEDS-PRINTED,

And sold by T. HANNAM, near the Methodist Chapel. 1795.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

## Candid Remarks, &c.

*Dear Brethren !*

**I**T must give much pain to every pious mind that is concerned for the truth as it is in Jesus, and the peace of our Zion, to observe the conduct of some of our good, but mistaken friends; who *have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* They have greatly disturbed the peace of this circuit, by publishing pamphlets, the tendency of which is to mislead the people, and prejudice their minds against some of the most respectable members of Conference, by groundless assertions and uncharitable surmises.—As a proof of this, I need only call your attention to the following particulars:—In the preface to Mr. Wesley's *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*, sold at the Chapel door a few nights ago, the author, after professing great esteem for Mr. Wesley's memory, informs us, that "*he was, under Christ, our wise Head, in doctrine and discipline;*" that "*his rules and maxims were fashioned after the genius and spirit of the Gospel of Jesus;*" and in the very same page, does not scruple to recommend to us, as "*a most sensible, candid, and scriptural book,*" a pamphlet, entitled, "*Considerations on a Separation of the Methodists from the Established Church.*" Now every one who reads this performance, and is at the same time acquainted with Mr. Wesley's doctrine and discipline, will discover as great a contrariety both to one and the other, as light to darkness!!

In the last page of *Reasons against a Separation*, a few quotations are given us from Mr. Wesley's works, in so unguarded and injudicious a manner, as to hold him up to public view as one of the most self-



self-contradicting and inconsistent mortals that the world ever beheld. What sincerity can there be in compliments paid to so excellent a person, who is at the same time thus wounded in the house of his friends?

The substance of what our injudicious Brethren wish to propagate and establish, may be reduced to the two following propositions:

1st, That Mr. Wesley never did separate from the established Church; but always used his power and influence to prevent it.

2d, That the Conference, since his death, have in some places granted a separation; and introduced novelties and innovations into our system never known amongst us in Mr. Wesley's life time, with a view to make the separation become *general*.

The first of these propositions, in a qualified sense, may be true; but in that sense, in which it is understood in the conclusion of "*Reasons against a Separation*" (see note 2d in last page) viz. preaching in Church hours, I say, in this sense, Mr. Wesley was a separatist to all intents and purposes.\* But whatever Mr. Wesley's thoughts of a separation might be in the year 1786, when Deptford friends requested preaching in Church hours, yet these were not his thoughts in the year 1790, (see note 1, of *Considerations, &c.*) as appears evident from a Sermon he then published, (see *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 13.) wherein he remarks concerning the society in Dublin, that "*one good end preaching in Church hours had answered, and which could not have been so well answered in any other way, was, (strange as it may sound) it prevented a separation from the Church.*"

Neither was preaching in Church hours the separation Mr. Wesley intended, when he published his *Twelve Reasons*; as is evident from the 8th Reason, where Mr. Wesley says, "*To form the plan of a new Church would require infinite time and care,*

*"with much more wisdom, greater depth and extent of  
"siveness of thought, than any of us are masters of."*

Now it is evident Mr. Wesley must mean here nothing less, than forming the Methodist Societies into an Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent Church; by which we must understand, the terms of Admission and Communion to be altered—the Rules of Discipline changed—a new mode of Government adopted, and fresh Church Officers appointed; which, as is observed above, might indeed require great wisdom and care:—But it is well known such a separation as this was never yet attempted, either in Mr. Wesley's life-time, or since his death; and it must have been against such a separation as *this*, and *this only*, that he has protested in his Twelve Reasons. For had he meant preaching in Church hours only, what depth of thought, what wisdom, time and care, would have been required to appoint it?

Thus have I endeavoured to rescue Mr. Wesley from those unfavourable shades, with which his mistaken friends have too inadvertently sullied his memory. And glad should I have been, if his venerable name had never been introduced into this unhappy controversy; for if there does appear, in any part of his conduct, the least glimpse of inconsistency, it was singly respecting the point in debate. Let Charity cover it with her veil.—He rests from his labours, and in the morning of the resurrection shall rise fairer than the sun, and shine in glory transcendent, for ever and ever.

I would observe, respecting the second proposition:—If our Venerable Father separated from the Church, so have the Conference; if he did not, neither have they;—for I boldly assert, that the Conference are now pursuing the OLD and ONLY plan which Mr. Wesley left them—by following the openings of Divine Providence.

That preaching in Church hours has been practised:



tified amongst us almost from the beginning, I need inform none who are acquainted with the London Societies; and you well know this has been the custom, for years back, at Hunslet and Morley, in this neighbourhood:—Also, when necessity required it, Mr. Wesley appointed the travelling preachers to administer the Sacraments; as a proof of this, I refer you to the following letter, written expressly on the subject by Mr. Murlin:

*“ In order to deceive the people, these discerning gentlemen will tell you, that the preachers have departed from Mr. Wesley’s plan: But I deny it. It was Mr. Wesley’s plan to follow the leadings of Providence. Though he was a Minister of the Church of England, yet, when called by Providence, he preached in the streets; built chapels, and preached in them; and employed Lay-preachers. He also sent Travelling-preachers to Scotland, to preach, baptize, administer the Sacrament, and to marry.*

*“ But these gentlemen affirm, that, the Sacrament was never given in England by Laymen, in Mr. Wesley’s life-time: but I deny it. Above thirty years ago, Mr. Wesley sent me to the city of Norwich, to a congregation, who desired the sacrament; and I both baptized their children, and administered the Sacrament to the people, part of three years; and the Preachers who followed me did the same. So there has been nothing done by the Preachers since Mr. Wesley’s death, but what had been done in his life-time.*

JOHN MURLIN.”

We shall now offer a few remarks on those Twelve Reasons, which twenty or thirty years ago induced Messrs. Wesleys to oppose a total separation from the Church; and consider how far, under present circumstances, they militate against the accommodating plan adopted by the Conference.

Reason I. is altogether personal, and can apply to none but Messrs. Wesleys themselves; for what-

ever solemn declarations they made, died with them, and could no way bind those that succeeded them.

Reason II. if it has any application, is altogether against those who so violently oppose the present excellent plan of accommodation, adopted by the Conference. But we forbear to call those opponents, as Mr. Wesley does, *persons seeking and desiring occasion of offence, the enemies of God and truth.*

Reason III. gives us a clear idea of Mr. Wesley's thoughts concerning the weakness or prejudice of good people; it was not their reason, but their prejudices which he feared; but we have cause to bless God, that since that time Reason has gained an amazing influence over the prejudices of both preachers and people;—as a proof of this, I refer you to the manly and impartial conduct of the Bristol District-Meeting, and the noble stand which the members of that society made in support of the Rights of Conference against undue influence.\*

Reason IV. and V. may have some weight, tho' not half so much as when Mr. Wesley wrote them, and these are strong arguments, why such a formal separation, as he there treats of, should be guarded against, on the one hand; and why the liberty which the wisdom of Conference has granted be protected, on the other:—For, as great numbers of our friends, in most of the largest societies, request the sacraments from our own preachers; and as others prefer the receiving of them at the Established Church; (an unity in sentiment appearing impossible, and perhaps wholly unnecessary) a happy medium was adopted by Conference, in hopes to conjoin both parties in one common Methodistic bond;—by advising those who prefer the Church to in-  
dulse

\* If the reader wishes to be informed more of this business, he is recommended to consult two very sensible pamphlets, one wrote by Mr. Benjamin Rhodes, of Birmingham, the other by Mr. Jonathan Crowther, of Bristol, both very respectable travelling preachers.  
—Sold by T. Hannam.

dulge their preference by going as usual, and by permitting those who do not attend at Church, to be accommodated by our own preachers in our own chapels.

This is a broad bottom and a liberal plan, the genuine index of enlightened minds and catholic spirits.

Reason VI. and VII. applied very well to the time of writing; but as the state of our societies is entirely altered, as "*We do not (in certain cases) all think and speak the same thing,*" and as "*Controversy is not quite asleep,*" though the forming a new church be by no means necessary, yet an extension of Christian privileges is become essentially requisite to our very continuance in one united body.

Reason VIII. Of this I have spoken at large already; and as this is the key which unlocks the meaning of all the other, I wish the reader to keep it constantly in view: It is *the forming a new Church*, that Mr. Wesley opposed; and not the extension of those privileges, which were *even then partially* enjoyed.

Reason IX. Here I observe, that as *unnecessary* alterations should *always* be avoided, so *now* should a *total* separation from the Church, lest any of this evil fruit should appear; but at present the scale seems quite changed and (sad to relate!) some of our people seem *much more* inclined to speak evil of our own *Preachers*, tho' by their instrumentality many of them have been brought to the knowledge of the truth. Sorry I am to say, that never since Methodism existed, was this evil half so prevalent as at present; and never was there a time, when our Preachers *more* needed our prayers, and *less* deserved our censures.

Reasons X. and XI. cannot possibly militate against the present uniting plan, however forcibly they might be directed against our establishing a new Church.

Mr.

Mr. Wesley's partiality for the Establishment may be evidently seen throughout these two Reasons; and tho' many good and great men have lived and died in communion with the Church, yet it must also be granted, that numbers of men, equally holy and useful, have found cause to *dissent*, and still have *preserved* their piety and usefulness:—In proof of this, I need only mention the names of Richard Baxter, and Joseph Alleine, in England, with the venerable Mr. Elliott, who fled from England to America, on account of that detestable act of Uniformity made in the reign of Charles II. by which 2000 of the brightest lights in the kingdom were extinguished in a day.\* And who will say, that the present Dr. Coke, is now either less holy or useful, when he is ordained Superintendant or Bishop of a Church, quite distinct from the Church of England, than he was when he served a parish? or the laborious Mr. Mather, who was also ordained *Bishop* by Mr. Wesley?

Reason XII. is principally applicable to Messrs. Wesleys, and much of its force died with them:—But as a great number of persons in this land belong to the Established Church, certainly care should be taken that none of those privileges which the members of it have enjoyed amongst us should be diminished; and this the Conference has wisely done, by continuing the morning and evening preaching, as usual, in many of those places even where service is appointed in Church hours; and also in not making the receiving the Lord's Supper from our own Preachers the *test* of communion amongst us.

In this plan nothing is done for one person, to the disadvantage of another; for the Methodist Preachers (like St. Paul) are *debtors to all men*; a *dispensation of the Gospel* is committed to them, *to go into all the world, to preach it to every creature*; and in the execution of this commission, they must rush through every opening door, neither regarding

\* See page 11.



high or low, Church Men or Dissenters, any person, or any thing, which would oppose their grand design of winning souls to Christ.

From what has been said, every one must observe, that tho' the Twelve Reasons, in the sense they were understood by Mr. Wesley at the time he wrote them, might have considerable force; yet it must be very injudicious of our friends, *now* to apply those Reasons against an extension of privileges in our societies, which Mr. Wesley applied against the forming a new Church;—for every one knows, that the constitution of our societies, is exactly the same as it ever was —We have no new terms of admission or communion, no new rules of discipline, no new Church officers appointed, no new mode of government adopted; but all things, of this nature, continue just as they were from the beginning —The Word of God is still our only and sufficient rule, both of faith and practice; and as that rule gives us no directions concerning the hours of preaching, neither does it enjoin us to attend the place of worship by law established, but leaves every man to his own judgment; let us imitate its divine Author, and give every man the *same* liberty, even the liberty which we wish for ourselves.

The unhappy controversies which are frequently found among Christians, might easily be prevented, if, instead of too great an opinion of our own wisdom we would attend more to the Word of God. The Self-important is never so happy, as when sitting in the Dictator's chair, to fix his own sentiments as the test and standard of truth. As it is of considerable importance to us, fallible creatures, to know that we are liable to mistakes, as well as our brethren, that we may search out and correct our errors; and as our only infallible guide in divine things is the Word of God, would it not be well for *all*, both preachers and people, seriously to consider the following passages of God's Word, and adopt them

them in our future conduct, as they may be applicable to our respective states and situations?

2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. *I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season.*

Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore, &c.*

Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

These scriptures fully define the time and place for the preachers.

#### To the People.

1 Thess. v. 21. *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*

1 Tim. v. 17, 19.

1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

Isaiah viii. 20. *To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

2 John 10, 11. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*

Jer. xxiii. 32. *Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit the people at all, saith the Lord.*

The two last passages apply to all Ministers who neither live nor preach the Gospel, Church Men as well as Dissenters;—and it is hoped, they will be a sufficient apology for those who deem it unlawful to attend their ministry. Were we but *duly* concerned for the welfare of precious souls, and our eyes singly directed to the glory of God, we could not but be exceedingly cautious what Ministers we pointed out as feeders of the lambs, and pastors of the sheep of the Shepherd of Israel. Instead of  
urging

urging attendance at those places where the Minister himself is a stranger to *real* religion, both in doctrine and practice, ought we not to say with our Lord—*Beware of false prophets, lest the blind be leaders of the blind, and both fall into the ditch;—lest we be partakers of their evil deeds,—or remotely instrumental in extorting the following cry from their wailing spirits in a world of woe—*

——“ Lord, avenge my blood  
On that un pitying wretch, who saw me run  
With full career, the dire enchanting road  
To these devouring flames, yet warn'd me not;  
Or faintly warn'd me; and with languid tone  
And cool harangue, denounc'd eternal fire  
And wrath divine !”

### Note referring to page 3.

“Some of our friends say, that Mr. Wesley declared that he lived and died a member of the Church of England;—would not they have done well to have given us Mr. Wesley's definition of the Church of England, which is as follows :

“ The Church of *England* is, that *body* of men in *England* in whom *there is one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith*, which have *one baptism*, and *one God and Father of all*. This, and this alone, is the Church of *England*, according to the doctrine of St. Paul.”——*Arminian Magazine*, vol. 9, page 14.—Of this Church *we also* hope to live and die members.

### Note for page 8.

\* Is it not strange, tho' the cruel policy of those times be universally reprobated, that some of the Methodists, both Preachers, Trustees and private members, should run into the same error, in these enlightened days—For if you will not worship God, *when, where,* and *as they please*, they would debar you from their pulpits, and exclude you from their society, if they had it in their power.

## APPENDIX.

## APPENDIX.

**A**S great offence hath been taken from our having preaching in Church hours on the Sabbath day, it is thought necessary (as many do not understand the circumstances) to lay a concise statement of the rise and progress thereof before our brethren, that they may see how we have followed the openings of Providence.

It pleased the Lord in the spring of 1794, to revive his work in a very remarkable manner at Woodhouse, which occasioned them to open their chapel on the Sabbath-day in the forenoon, for prayer, &c. The Lord was pleased in a very extraordinary way to bless them, in this mean of grace; so that great numbers were brought to the knowledge of the truth. The report thereof spread, people flocked from various parts, and great numbers often went from Leeds; so that their chapel many times could not contain them. Some of our friends wished that a similar meeting might be introduced at Leeds;—First, With hopes that it might be equally useful; and secondly, to accommodate those who had no fixed place of worship. Mr. Hanby (our worthy Assistant) was consulted on the subject, and after some hesitation, gave his consent, for a prayer-meeting to be held in the vestry adjoining the chapel; but as it could by no means contain the people that attended, on the third Sabbath (by our Assistant's leave) we held it in the chapel.

By this time a few individuals began to be offended, and requested Mr. Hanby to withdraw the permission he had given; but as he saw no just cause, he very properly refused, lest by so doing he should sin against Christ. The next Leaders' meeting, it was *unanimously* requested, that a fresh place should be



be taken, in which, those who wished, might have prayer meetings, or preachings at any time, as they pleased. Expostulations then ensued, that the meeting might be held for another Sabbath, and nothing done in haste; but all to no purpose.—

One or two Leaders determined to lock the door, and published in the chapel that there would be no prayer-meeting there the Sabbath-day following. We also having a key might, in opposition, have insisted on our privilege; but, as lovers of peace, we quietly withdrew. According to the aforesaid *unanimous* request, a place, which is called BETHEL, was taken, and the expences of fitting up defrayed by a few friends; a prayer-meeting was held there two or three Sabbath-days in the forenoon; then preaching was introduced, which continues to the present, to accommodate those, who in general did not attend the worship of God at the established Church. Judge ye; no, let the world, let posterity judge, what *just* cause of offence in all this. Many of our societies had the same indulgence in Mr. Wesley's life-time. And every one has even now full liberty to go elsewhere, if he or she can more profit thereby.

But however, in a few weeks, to our great astonishment, those very people, who requested that a place might be taken, and who promised not to find fault, were *the first*, and almost the *only* persons, who began to censure, and do all in their power to oppose the Innovation as they pleased to term it: And, *Oh! tell it not in Gath!* Some even represented us, who preferred the ministry of our own preachers to others, as disaffected to Government, troublers of our Israel, &c. Though we believe that we wish as well to the Government of our country, as those who calumniate us. But it is not our province, as Christians, to dabble in politics; *the kingdom which we seek is ONE that is to come, of which the builder and maker is God.*

For many years past, the Methodists in Leeds

B

might

might have attended any or every dissenting place of worship, and no offence taken (*sed tempora mutantur*); now to hear our own preachers at hours the most convenient for our families, is become an unpardonable crime; a crime, for which, if some had their wishes, every one found guilty, would be expelled from our camp.

———“ Man—proud man,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,  
As make the angels weep.”

“ The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,  
yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.”

We are happy to find Mr. Wesley has so effectually pleaded our cause, in the following letter, published in the *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 3, page 101; we therefore recommend it to the perusal of our friends:—

*Of Public Worship, in a letter to a friend, by the  
Rev. Mr. John Wesley.*

“ Dear Sir,

Sept. 20, 1757.

“ The longer I am absent from London, and the more I attend the service of the Church in other places, the more I am convinced of the unspeakable advantage which the people called Methodists enjoy. I mean, even with regard to Public Worship, particularly on the Lord's Day. The Church where they assemble is not gay or splendid; which might be an hindrance on the one hand: nor sordid or dirty, which might give distate on the other: but plain as well as clean. The persons who assemble there, are not a gay, giddy crowd, who come chiefly to see and be seen: nor a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians; whose religion lies in a dull round of duties: but a people most of whom know, and the rest earnestly seek to worship God in spirit and in truth. Accordingly, they do not spend their time there in bowing and curtsying, or in staring about them: but in looking upward and looking inward, in har-  
kening

kening to the voice of God, and pouring out their hearts before him.

“ It is also no small advantage that the person who reads prayers (though not always the same,) yet is always one, who may be supposed to speak from his heart, one whose life is no reproach to his profession; and one who performs that solemn part of divine service, not in a careless, hurrying, slovenly manner, but seriously and slowly, as becomes him who is transacting so high an affair between God and man.

“ Nor is their solemn addresses to God interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit, and with the understanding also: not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry; such as would sooner provoke a Critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn Critic. What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end (not by a poor hum-drum-wretch who can scarce read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but) by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service. Nor does he take just “two staves,” but more or less, as may best raise the soul to God: especially when sung in well-composed and well-adapted tunes, not by a handful of wild unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation: and then not lolling at ease or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another, but all standing before God, and praising him lustily and with a good courage.

“ Nor is it a little advantage as to the next part of the service, to hear a Preacher whom you know to live as he speaks, speaking the genuine Gospel of present

present Salvation through Faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost: declaring present, free, full Justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward Holiness. And this you hear done in the most clear, plain, simple, unaffected language; yet with an earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, and with the demonstration of the spirit.

“ With regard to the last and most awful part of divine service, the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, altho’ we cannot say that either the unworthiness of the Minister, or the unholiness of some of the Communicants, deprives the rest of a blessing from God, yet do they greatly lessen the comfort of receiving. But these discouragements are removed from you: you have proof that he who administers, fears God: and you have no reason to believe, that any of your Fellow-Communicants walk unworthy of their profession.\* Add to that the whole service is performed in a decent and solemn manner, is invivified by hymns suitable to the occasion, and concluded with prayer that comes not out of feigned lips.

“ Surely then of all the people in Great-Britain, the Methodists would be the most inexcusable, should they let any opportunity slip of attending that worship which has so many advantages, should they prefer any before it: or not continually improve by the advantages they enjoy! What can be pleaded for them, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth: if they are still outward worshippers only, approaching God with their lips while their hearts are far from him? Wea, if having known him, they do not daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

J. W.  
\* If these are such great privileges to our society in London, why ought not all, who request it, to enjoy the same throughout the Kingdom?